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Villages near the Dean River

*(38) *Awatlala*: the present site of the Kimsquit Indian village near the mouth of Dean River. The meaning of the name could not be learned.

*(39) *Nadel*, "Canyon": on the shore of Dean River at the bottom of the canyon. This large town was only recently deserted.

(40) *Apat'i*, "Occupied Mound": on the south side of Dean River about one mile from the sea. This small town was deserted many years ago. The name is derived from the small mound on which it was built.

*(39) *Natsqmuk*, "Many Spawning Sockeye Salmon": on south side of Dean River, about one and a quarter miles from the sea. A large town recently deserted.

*(42) *Nasqâjin*, "Place of Many Spring Salmon": on south bank about twenty-five miles from the sea. This spot was not settled when people first occupied this world, but later *Alpenlâm* (I, p. 330) took possession of it.

(41) *Iyamuk*: east side of river twenty-eight miles from the sea. There is doubt about this town. It is said to have been a colony of the Kimsquit River settlement, a statement difficult to understand.

(42) *Simal'ax*, "Where Canoes Are Left": on the north side of the river about thirty-five miles from the sea. Immediately opposite was *Sulkaha*, "Winter Trail." These two are considered as forming one town, but were probably never more than camping grounds at the spot where the winter trail to the interior left the river. It is possible, however, that they formed a town, since the names of the alleged first settlers in the beginning of time are preserved.

*(43) *Aitkin*: at Salmon House on the upper Dean River.

The history of the villages on the upper Dean is puzzling. Mythological accounts of their founding were obtained, and some of the older people stated that they had been occupied until recent years. On the other hand, there are apparently

1774 reliable traditions of Carrier settlements there. The probable explanation is that the Bella Coola formerly extended over the area, either in actual fact or according to mythology, but were supplanted by the Carriers.

1776 [107] [164] [734] The Dean River is called *Nuskel*, and the generic name for the people of the Dean valley is *Sarcleno*. Almost eighty years ago a smallpox epidemic so reduced the villages on the Kimsquit that the survivors abandoned them and moved to the Dean. At that time a certain Kimsquit man is believed to have said: "We will take their places and kill even their dogs."

[869] [731] Since that time the joint settlement has suffered one epidemic after another, until a mere handful of the people survive, and they are almost entirely descended from the Kimsquit River immigrants. Within the last few years, these have requested permission from the Bella Coola to abandon Kimsquit entirely and live among them. The two groups have [628] always been on the best of terms, but the Bella Coola have not forgotten the fate of the Dean River people and have been unwilling to admit the Kimsquit survivors.

Villages on the Kimsquit River, Ea'oh'

361 *(44) *Ea'oh'*: this large and important town, at the mouth of the river, was deserted at the time of the smallpox epidemic.

*(45) *Nawulet*: this settlement can be grouped with the last-mentioned, although situated on the shore of Dean Channel, at the site of the present Manitou Cannery, six miles away. No meaning of the name is known.

Tribal Organization

619 The subject of this monograph is the people of the above forty-five villages. They will be referred to as a *tribe*, and as this term is customarily limited to a political unit, a brief justification for its use is necessary.

342 361 Each Bella Coola village consisted of a single row of houses, built along the shore of a river or the ocean. The front doors

[illegible] 534 exist by other myths which [illegible] time of their own record. From this night [illegible] became a shaman and said when he had seen when he was giving a dance of his own. His brother [illegible] were downstream until he came to a large house at [illegible] outside of which stood a huge hollow-trunk. No one was in this house and [illegible] took possession of it.

A PRIMEVAL CHOSEN HOME[1]

Long ago at the time the world was first populated there were no rivers anywhere, for each were confined underground in a cavern-like prison called *Nuxnitlitwaxis*, the approach to which was barred by a huge boulder. Not only were the rivers shut up, but with them were their occupants, including the salmon. First Eagle tried to break this barrier, but without avail; then Raven succeeded. Since then the Bella Coola River has flowed to its present course. But the Turner River was still in bondage, to the disgust of the shaker who wished to travel up it to the home of the chief, *Snumaut'ic*. The Carpenter, *skitlaitl*, took pity on them and by breaking the barrier permitted them to reach their destination.

Origin Myths of Other Tribes

179 538 [424] As has been repeatedly stated, the Bella Coola have obtained many prerogatives by marriages with the members of neighbouring tribes. Among these are, according to their belief, myths dealing with the peopling of distant localities. Ceremonially and sociologically, such traditions have the same importance as myths that describe Bella Coola as the final place of settlement of the first inhabitants. Accordingly, they can be given at this point.

179 538 • 174 114 In the previous section the original landing-places of some of the individuals described is said to have been outside the Bella Coola valley. Boas, discussing this fact (p. 111), suggests that such myths may reflect the movements of the ancestors of the Bella Coola from the parent Salish stock. Though this is a plausible hypothesis, it is also possible that

[1] This place could not be identified.
[2] Related by Louie Charlie.

a foreign myth, obviously by marriage, might have been shared in the course of generations to the Bella Coola persons, preserving as the only foreign character that of settlement at a distance at the beginning of time.

ORIGIN MYTH OF OWIKI[1]

In the beginning of time *Aqunitsa* learned that four brothers should be sent down to the earth. The eldest, whose name was *Hkaisla*, went down from a hole in *Nuxnai* and told his younger brothers to wait while he went ahead to reconnoiter. He took the form of a wolf and, as soon as he had reached the earth, went far to the east, where he obtained some abalone shells. Then he returned to *Aqunitsa*'s house, left his spoil with his brothers, and again went off alone to the east. This time he brought back some copper. After this he was ready to settle, so the four assumed the form of wolves and went down to Calvert Island, Owiki, as the Bella Bella call it. There they assumed human form and their wolf skins floated back aloft.

Aqunitsa did not give them food to carry with them, but he told them they would find sea-lions waiting to be killed on Sea-lion Island. Accordingly they hunted on that island, as their descendants, the people of Owiki, have done to this day.

Aqunitsa had given *Hkaisla* a box containing some of the cone-shaped whistles used in ocean dances. The three elder brothers decided that they alone should perform the ocean ceremonial and that, accordingly, the youngest should be kept in ignorance of the contents of the box, as uninitiated people are at the present time. He was a mere boy and his elder brothers used to leave him at home when they went hunting, but they had given him the most explicit instructions not to open the carefully roped box, containing their treasures.

All went well for some time, but finally the boy yielded to temptation and opened the box. His brothers returned unexpectedly, and found him examining the whistles, with his head almost out of sight within. They decided to kill him at once. They crowded up, closed the cover on his head, and sat on the box until life was extinct. Then they laid the body on the ground before them as they sat behind the fire, and sent one of their number out to gather three small plant sticks. When this was done they covered the corpse with eagle down and sat on the ground around it, raising and lowering the sticks as if they were throwing objects into the

[1] Related by Joshua Moody.

only for a chief, can be employed for a dead child. In this case, the theme describes the efforts of the parents to recompense the deceased in the conditions of their existence, and the number of times he had been commercially married. The text of one such a few years ago is:

"We said, Hail! Kwakiutls [the child's crest was the Sun] when she was born. What more could we have done? Why did she leave us?"

The text may refer to the prerogative of employing mourners, as in the following:

"Come ye professional mourners, help me to give voice to my lamentations."

The tunes of mourning songs are usually remembered from year to year, and the singers may merely alter words to make an old song applicable. In some cases, such compositions are changed so slightly that they become virtually possessions of an ancestral family, and may then be preserved for generations until even the history of the names embodied is forgotten. Occasionally, ancient relationship between two such groups can be deduced from the occurrence of the same names in their mourning songs, although all traditions of intermarriage have been forgotten. There is considerable difference between the tunes of *chaunāt* and *dwahuhit*; in fact, this distinction may be more important than the themes, since the latter do not invariably conform to the types just described. A few items of ancestral history may be incorporated into a song dealing primarily with the actions of the deceased and *nine* wives. Sometimes four of one type are used, sometimes two of each. Much thought is devoted to the compositions, the singers meeting every day to try over and improve one another's efforts. The texts, long and complicated, require much practice, since any error would be an admission of gross inefficiency. These daily rehearsals take place in the donor's house and he is required to provide food for the singers. It is not uncommon to use a song of Bella Bella origin, since the Bella Coola admit that members of that tribe excel in compositions of this type.

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The details of this incident are sufficiently circumstantial to presuppose a distorted historical event. Moreover, many of the old people had heard of the incident, another indication of the accuracy of the tradition. As far as could be judged, news of the vision must have reached Bella Coola about the year 1800.[1] It is said that the *xnâsxw* sang the following song in a language unknown to any of his hearers: *Aqsimuxw aqsimuxw xistk axnumxw qaxiya.*[2] None of the older men appear to have any idea of the meaning of these words, or even of the language to which they belong.

No event has had such profound effect on the lives of the Indians of British Columbia as the coming of the white man. It would be surprising if, looking backwards, they did not feel that it had been foretold by prophets. The preceding story is the only Bella Coola example of such a belief, although tales of a similar kind are found widely throughout the province. In addition, there are a few traditions of prophecies fulfilled by the white man. One of these is that long, long ago, a shaman stated that in the future the dead would return with the ability to make fire by rubbing the end of a small twig along a rough surface, and that, soon after, all the Indians would die. The Bella Coola consider that matches are referred to in the first part of the statement, and read their own doom

[1] The approximate date was determined in the following manner: The most complete account of the event was obtained from a man fifty-six years old in 1924 who had heard the details from his mother. He was the youngest of a large family, so it is probable that his mother was about forty-five years of age when he was born. When a child of about ten, she had been told of the vision by a woman just passed the age of child-bearing, who had recently reached adolescence when news of the event reached Bella Coola. The figures can be arranged in tabular form.

Duration of the informant's life	56 years.
Interval between his birth and the time his mother heard the news	35 years.
Interval between transmission of the news to the informant's mother and its receipt in Bella Coola	35 years.
Total	126 years.

Allowing for exaggerations, this would make the correct date about 1800.

[2] A phonograph record was made of this song for the National Museum of Canada. Recorded as song VII D 21b; singer, Jim Pollard.

[illegible]

[illegible] natural and paternal institutions. Descent is in the paternal line; but a man, at the time of his marriage, receives his father-in-law's crest as a device, which he holds in trust for his son, so that actually each individual inherits the crest of his maternal grandfather. The clans are exogamic.

The organization of the Salish tribes of the southern coast, who are the geographically closest related to the Bella Coola, is somewhat similar to that of the Kwakiutl. They are divided into village communities, a few of which have amalgamated, as, for instance, among the Salish tribes of Vancouver Island, among whom the tribe consists of a number of septs, each of which forms a separate village. Here the influence of southern tribes is very much evident. While most of the village communities have certain crests, these do not play so important a part in the social life of the tribe or in its mythology as they do among the Kwakiutl, and the village communities are not exogamic. The Salish tribes of the interior are organized in very loose village communities without any trace of totem.

The fundamental difference between the southern tribes and the northern tribes consists, therefore, in the fact that the northern tribes have a limited number of clans which are present in all the villages, while among the southern tribes the village community is the only unit of organization.

The organization of the Bella Coola resembles most closely that of the Coast Salish tribes of southern British Columbia. In both cases the tribe is divided into village communities, which possess crests and traditions. This latter feature is, however, very much more strongly developed among the Bella Coola than among the southern tribes. They differ in their laws of intermarriage. While among the southern Coast Salish tribes there is a tendency to exogamy, the Bella Coola have developed a system of endogamy.

The tribes of the Coast Salish of the Gulf of Georgia claim descent from mythical ancestors, who are believed to have originated at the place which the tribe now inhabit. A number of traditions of this kind bear evidence of having been derived from historical events. Some of the tribes in the delta of Fraser River have traditions which refer to the amalgamation of tribes who descended from the mountains, and who are described as the descendants of animals living in the mountains, and of the natives of the delta.[1] I believe that the tribal traditions of the Bella Coola which were told in a previous chapter also bear evidence of the historical fates of the tribe. It is very remarkable that the important tradition of Tsimi'an gives Fraser River as the place to which he descended from heaven. In another tradition, Bute Inlet is given as the place at which one of the Bella Coola tribes originated. In still another one, Skeena River is mentioned as the home of one of the tribes (see p. 69). I do not doubt that these allusions to territory

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[1] Sixth Report of the Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science on the Northwestern Tribes of Canada, 1906, p. 3.

inhabited by Salish tribes refer to the early separation of the Bella Coola tribe from the related tribes of the Gulf of Georgia, and that in their traditions they have retained the memory of the emigration of part of the tribe from the southern territory. It seems also probable that the allusion to the origin of one family of the tribe on Skeena River refers to a mixture with the tribes inhabiting northern British Columbia.

The traditions of the tribes also describe the style of house used by the ancestors of certain village communities; and it is interesting to note that some of these houses correspond to the subterranean lodges that were in use among the Chilcotin, while others correspond to the tents that were in use among the Carriers. It is said that the ancestor of the Nuxa'lk and the subterranean lodge which is called to'pa (see p. 93), while the ancestor of the Nuq'a'ist used the skin lodge which is called skwas (see p. 141).

Since the Bella Coola retain the fundamental traits of the social organization of their congeners in the south, and since their traditions bear evidence of an emigration from that region, and since, furthermore, the linguistic evidence proves that the Bella Coola and the Coast Salish at one time inhabited contiguous areas on the coast, we are justified in assuming that the general culture of the Bella Coola at the time of their emigration must have resembled that of the Coast Salish. The question then arises, How did the peculiar endogamic system and the remarkable mythology of the Bella Coola originate from the much simpler forms that we find among the Coast Salish?

One of the most remarkable features in the inner life of the tribes of the northern coast of British Columbia is the great importance of the clan legend, which is considered one of the most valuable properties of each clan or family. It is carefully guarded in the same way as material property, and an attempt on the part of a person not a member of the clan to tell the tradition as his own is considered one of the gravest offenses against property rights. The possession of a clan tradition is felt by the Indians to be one of his most important prerogatives. When, therefore, the Bella Coola settled on Bella Coola River, and were thrown into contact with the northern Coast tribes, the lack of a well-developed clan tradition must have been felt as a serious drawback. The physical appearance of the Bella Coola proves that at one time they must have intermarried to a great extent with the tribes [illegible] Bella. Through these marriages the peculiar customs of the Coast tribes were first introduced among them. This is shown by the fact that a great many of the mythological names can be proved to be of Kwakiutl origin, of which stock the Bella Bella are a branch. Thus the name for their supreme deity, Smā'yakila, is a Kwakiutl word meaning "the one who must be worshipped." The name Q'aq'imkilā'ko is also of Kwakiutl origin, and may be translated as "the wealthiest one." The great frequency of

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words of Kwakiutl derivation will become clear by a glance at the following list, which contains words that can be proved to be of Kwakiutl origin:—

q'ulxaitx = shaman.
nûk' = spoken.
K'ûnuk'in (q. sql) (Kwakiutl, Q'ûnuk'ala) = the ground chief.
Hun'kun (q. sual) = a kitchen knife.
x'Elp'aq (x = the copper anchor.
x'El'qemûlkw = name of Wawaskûl'anx (the ending, the designation "-amux" in Kwakiutl).
x'ugwanû' = mythological name of deer.
Mû'lnk'ilut.
Mûsmû's (q. qûl).
Nû'kun = the country of the salmon (q. qûx (Kwakiutl, sac) = salmon.
Nû'qûlla (cp. sq, Mû).
q'!'aaxsk'an (q. sac = the end of trunk.
q'!'aaxsmut (q. sul).
q'!'aaq'aaxk'ûla q'!'ûlx (Kwakiutl, Q'!'aq'aaxûla q) = the southeast sun.
q'!'ûm.
Q'ûnûnûk'un (q. sal).
Q'!'aaq'aax (q. ga) = the easterly sun.
Q'!'ûmqûnx (q. sa) = rock at opposite side of river.
Q'!'ûmxsaxs (q. s!) = country at mouth of river.
Saaq'ulkûla (q. sql) = the one who runs to counterpart.
s!'ûsx = a kindness fish or smelt (cp. sk, ss, gh).
Sasqûlk'ûnûla (q. sa).
T'!'ûpaxs (q. s!) = the bear.
Xûsaa'ûx (q. gû) = sun.
Y!'ûk'ûmaxs (q. ga) = the greatest river.

With these names and customs the clan traditions must have found their way to the Bella Coola, but their social organization differed fundamentally from that of the Bella Bella branch of the Kwakiutl. While the latter, owing to intimate contact with the northern tribes, had adopted the four-clan system with prevalent maternal descent, the Bella Coola were still distinctly divided into village communities that were not exogamic. It seems very likely that the jealousy with which the ownership of a clan tradition was guarded by the Coast tribes was very early introduced among the Bella Coola. Two means were available for preventing outsiders from acquiring the traditions. Among the Coast tribes with prevailing maternal institutions, among whom a limited number of clans existed, the ordinary law of inheritance was sufficient to retain the tradition inside of the clan. Not so among the Bella Coola. If their organization at an early time was similar to that of the Coast Salish, it is likely that the child was counted as well a member of the father's as of the mother's family, although the young women generally moved to the village occupied by her husband. If the child belonged to the families of both parents, it had the right to use the traditions of either family; and consequently in the course of a few generations, the traditions acquired by each family would have spread practically over the whole tribe. There were only two methods possible to avoid this result. The one was to prevent marriages outside the village community; and this method would seem to have been most natural for a tribe organized in village communities, members of which were allowed to intermarry. The other method would have been to regulate the laws of inheritance in such a way that the child had to

follow either father or mother, but that it had not the right to use the property of both parents. It seems to my mind that the former method was more likely to develop under the existing social conditions, and that to this reason we must ascribe the development of an endogamic system among the Bella Coola. The occurrence of endogamic marriage among this tribe is quite isolated on the Pacific coast. All the other tribes have exogamic institutions, and by this means preserve their property rights. It is interesting to note that the southern Kwakiutl, who originally seem to have been organized in village communities, have adopted exogamic institutions; but there is a notable difference, in the organization of the village community, between the Bella Coola and the Kwakiutl. Among the Bella Coola we generally find four ancestors to each village,—usually three men and one woman. It is true that these are generally called brothers and sister, but they were created independently by Sun, and are therefore not necessarily considered as blood relations. Among the Kwakiutl the village community are considered the descendants of one single being; consequently, among the latter tribe they are all relatives, who are forbidden to intermarry; while among the Bella Coola they are not relatives, and may intermarry.

My interest is, therefore, that the various social system of the Bella Coola developed through the influence of the customs of the Coast tribes upon the home social unit of the Salish village community. The possession of clan traditions was felt as a great advantage, and consequently the desire developed to possess clan traditions. These were acquired partly by intermarriage with the Coast tribes, as is shown by the fact that many of these traditions are borrowed from these tribes, partly by independent invention. The desire to guard the traditions which were once acquired led to the development of endogamic institutions, in order to prevent the spread of the traditions over the whole tribe.

The jealousy with which the traditions are guarded has had the effect of making each family try to prevent other families from knowing its own clan traditions. For this reason the clan traditions of the whole tribe are remarkably inconsistent. We find, for instance, that the well-known raven legend of the northern Coast tribes has been utilized by many families as a family tradition. But while one family uses one part of the tradition, other families use other parts of the same tradition. Thus it happens that among the Bella Coola we find the most contradictory myths in regard to important events in the world's history. Some families maintain that the Raven liberated the sun, while, according to another one, the Hawk was essential to bringing about the present state of affairs. Still others say that Tsimalus, during his travels, caused the sun to appear. The discrepancies in the traditions referring to the visit of the Hawk and Wasp to their tribes, the Sun, are also very remarkable. Although a considerable amount of

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contradiction is inherent in all the mythologies of the North Pacific coast, they nowhere reach such a degree as among the Bella Coola; and I presume the fact that the traditions are kept secret by the various families accounts for this curious condition.

The prayers of the Bella Coola directed to Sun or Tl'ëm bear a remarkable resemblance to the prayers of the Tsimshian addressed to Locha, the sky. In both tribes we find the idea that when the Sun wipes his face it will be clear weather, and men will be happy; consequently the prayer to the deity "to wipe his face" occurs quite often.

One of the most important customs that the Bella Coola borrowed from the Coast tribes is the kl'ëtsut ceremonial, with which are connected the various secret societies, particularly the custom of ceremonial cannibalism. The ceremonies and the paraphernalia used by the Bella Coola and by the Kwakiutl are practically identical. I told above (p. 34) the legend explaining the origin of cannibalism. Among the Bella Bella and Kwakiutl, another tradition is told to explain the origin of this custom. The tradition tells of a spirit called Baxbakualanuxs'wae, who lives in the forest, and who initiates the members of the Cannibal Society. The series of traditions clustering around this being differ fundamentally from those referring to the Cannibal Society of the Bella Coola. The custom has also spread to the Tsimshian, who say that the secret societies were introduced by a hunter who was taken into the nest of a cliff by a white bear. Inside he saw a house, in which the various societies were performing their ceremonies. It appears, therefore, that the same ritual which is practised by these distinct tribes is explained by three fundamentally distinct myths; and we must conclude that in this case the ritual is older than the myth,—that the latter has been invented to make us explain customs that were borrowed from foreign tribes, so that the ritual is the primary phenomenon, while the myth is secondary.[1]

These considerations explain some of the psychological motives for the development of certain traditions and myths, as well as the curious inconsistency of the clan traditions of the Bella Coola. They do not, however, explain the most fundamental characteristic of the traditions of the tribe. I pointed out in the third chapter of this paper, that, notwithstanding the numerous contradictions contained in family legends, the conception of the world and the functions of the various deities are so well defined that we must consider the mythology of this tribe really superior to that of the neighboring tribes. While the latter believe in a great many spirits which are not coordinated, we have here a system of deities. The existence of a systematic mythology among the Bella Coola proves that under favorable conditions the advance from the lower forms of beliefs to higher forms may be a very rapid one.

[1] See Report of the U. S. National Museum for 1895, pp. 599 ff.

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